

Fasting

although the feast was supposedly given in our honor, we were placed on one side of the main participants. After the kettles containing the food had been put on twice, it became daylight and the feast was over. 159*
787

The following spring we moved to the Mississippi in order to trap. I was still fasting and ate only at night. My brothers used to flatter me, telling me that I was the cleverest of them all and, in consequence, I used to continue fasting although I was often very hungry. In spite of my desire to fast, however, I could not resist the temptation of being around the girls. I wanted always to be near them. They were generally in their menstrual lodges ¹³ when I looked for them. My parents did not wish me to go near the girls then but I went nevertheless. [221]
[224]
[152]
[185]
[865]

My parents told me that only those boys who had no connection with women would be blessed by the spirits. Throughout this time my sole wish was to appear great in the sight of the people. To be praised by my fellowmen was all I desired. And I certainly received what I sought. I stood high in their estimation. That the women might like me was another of the reasons why I wanted to fast. But as to being blessed, I learned nothing about it, although I went around with the air of one who had received many blessings and talked as such a one would talk. [156]

¹³ Any contact with menstruating women, or even with objects in any way connected with them, will, it is the firm belief of the Winnebago, destroy the power of sacred objects or individuals temporarily sacred. Fasting youths were regarded as such. [841]
[178]
[185]

* 159 §4. *Reminiscences of Childhood*

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The following spring I stopped fasting.

In those days we used to travel in canoes. My father used to spear fish and always took me along with him, and this I enjoyed very much. He kept a club in the canoe and after he had speared a fish, I would kill it with the club as it was jumping around. Sometimes my mother accompanied us. She sat in the stern of the boat and rowed while my father stood in the prow and speared the fish. I killed all those thrown in the canoe.

- [865] Sometimes my parents would start out without me, but I would then cry so bitterly that I, in the long run, induced them to take me along. Sometimes they whipped me and told me to go home, but I would follow them so far that they were then afraid to let me go back alone and I would thus be permitted to ride with them. Indeed I exerted myself greatly in crying and as I cried, ran after them and followed them very far, I was always taken along in the end.

[342] In those days we lived in the old-fashioned Indian lodges. In winter our fire was placed in the center of the lodge and my father used to keep it burning all night. When he placed a large log in the fire it would burn a long time.

[354]